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SAVED BY HOPE.

"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."—ROMANS viii., 24, 25.

We are said, sometimes, to be saved by faith. It is said sometimes, as here, that we are saved by hope. It may at first seem as though there were contrariety because there is variety. There is in the action of every mind never any one element working alone. There is a combination of elements or of faculties that lead or guide; and when they are all congenial and co-operative, and stand connected with the certainty of men's right living and right dying, then you may say, indifferently, of them all, that you are guided and saved either by one or by another, since they all are present in this blessed partnership of salvation.

One thing is sure, that of all books which ever were written, there is none that tends to project a man's thoughts into the future, and to thrust a man forward, so much as the New Testament. Never was there a book that, directly or indirectly, opened elements which belonged to the future as it does. Never was there a book which laid down a schedule for conduct and character which of itself necessitated forward action of the mind and feeling so much as the New Testament. Never was there a book whose latent and undisclosed philosophy implied so strongly as does the New Testament the on-going of men, or their opening and development, which is always a work toward the future.

Now, hope covers all that ground which the mind occu-

pies in looking into the future for certain great values or results—not merely in forelooking, but in looking forward with special and concurrent joy.

Hope is distinctively and universally recognized as a pleasure-bearing faculty ; and when men are said to be “ saved by hope,” it is meant that they are saved by a generic exercise or conduct of the mind by which it works forward for itself toward its destiny—toward all the things which it esteems most highly, and which it most desires. And it works not bitterly, nor with acerbity, nor with any sense or feeling except that of cheer, and happiness ; and peculiar happiness—happiness that, although it stands in a certain relation to our past experience, looks at the future as a sort of escape from the present, as a realization of our ideal, and as something which is higher and better, and which removes us further from trouble and vexation in this world. It is a mood of mind which, while it does not refuse the past as a source of knowledge and guidance, and as a sphere in which lie great duties that are incumbent upon us, yet furnishes men with spirit and aptitude for present living by opening in them such a sense of their future as shall bring upon them new joys ; joys from fresh sources ; joys not tainted with evil ; joys springing from ideal conceptions ; joys as pure to the soul as the dews are to the flowers in summer.

This saying that we are “ saved by hope ” is only, as I have already intimated, a conformity of the spiritual philosophy of the New Testament to the actual facts of man’s existence, and to the problem of life. For men here are never born at their full. They never grow up in any assignable number of years to a perfect condition. There is a side (and that is the side on which they are almost always looked at) where men are imperfect and sinful ; and they mourn their imperfection and sinfulness : but there is another side which men ought to bear in mind, which is fully recognized in the New Testament, and which God certainly bears in mind—namely, the side on which, out of limitation and imperfection and even sinfulness, is growing a constitution of things which is developing better and better ends, better and better characters, better and better conditions.

It pleases me to see my oak-trees growing. I wish they would grow faster and become larger. I should be very glad if I could make them grow a hundred years in one, so that I could sit under them as I sat under the great live-oaks in the South. But they will not grow in any such way as that ; I see that they are little things ; and when I think of big oaks, I say to mine, " What poor little sniveling things you are ! How insufficient you are as trees ! " Nevertheless, I do not despise them because they have not yet grown. I say to them, " Grow on. You will come to it by and by. You have it in you. " And from year to year they grow more and more ; and in time they shall become large trees, with wide-spreading branches, underneath which men shall sit, in the boughs of which birds shall rest, and which shall be crowned with beauty and majesty ; for the summer shall caress them, and the winter shall make them strong by its storms, and in every way nature is engaged working upon them to develop them. I should be a poor dendrologist if I walked every day along the border of my little paradise on the hill, and flouted my trees. " Oh ! this is an *onus arboris*. What an apology for a tree it is ! This is an Austrian pine ; now I have seen the Austrian pine on Austrian mountains, and this is hardly even an apology for it. " If then I said of my ash-tree, " Well, that is a poor ash. Why, I could almost jump over it ; whereas the true ash of the field is so high that the birds can scarcely fly to the top of it ; " if I thus went on calling my trees to nought because they were so thin in stem, so narrow in spread, so low in height, so imperfect and crude, how unfair and unreasonable I should be. I do not do so at all. I go around among my trees, and say, " Ah ! how much larger you are than you used to be ! How you are growing ! " And I imagine how much they will have grown when they are five years old. They almost touch each other now ; and I say to myself, " The time will come when some of these trees will have to come out in order to give the others a chance to spread, and when those that remain will have to be pruned. " I take as much pleasure with my quarter-ways as I should if they were half-ways ; and I shall take as much pleasure with my half-ways as I should if they

were whole-growths—and more ; for if they were full-grown, I should enjoy the comfort of them, but I should not have the pleasure of seeing them grow, or of cultivating them ; for when a tree is finished the satisfaction of tending it and nursing it is gone. You can get some other satisfaction from it, but not that.

Now, I look upon men as starting in growth and developing toward purity. That is the divine idea. There is nothing that requires so much to bring it to its own nature as man—for man's nature lies not at the beginning, but at the end. It is not what he is in the seed form that is his true nature, but what he is when he is carried to the utmost extension that belongs to the mind. That which men call *nature* in a man is not his true nature. Grace is trying to bring men back, or to carry them forward, to their real nature. In such an economy as that which prevails in this world, the philosophical problem of human life is, how to unfold mankind, and bring them to their true perfected nature ; and in the solution of that problem, as the fundamental and governing element, hope is precisely that which men want. Faith is of the same nature. Trust, also, is of the same nature. All of them are, as it were, golden cords which lead up to the Throne ; and by them men draw themselves into the future. So that if it be faith, faith takes us out of the present and the visible to the invisible and the future ; or, if it be trust, trust takes us from the region of the past and advances us upward and forward ; and if we are saved by hope, it will be because hope is pleasure-bearing, and has in it encouragement, sweetness, and enjoyment. It is that which carries us away from the past, and lifts us out of the present, and brings us to the glowing and glorious future.

The apostle says, "We are saved by hope ; but hope that is seen is not hope." When you look upon the attainments that you have made, upon that which you have achieved, you cannot properly say, "That is hope." Sometimes, however, the expression is conventionally used in that way. Sometimes persons say, "I have a hope," meaning that they have gone through a certain experience. Men may with propriety say, "I shall be saved by hope," meaning that

they have a hope that through God they will be saved by and by ; but sometimes they use that expression, meaning that they have accomplished or wrought out that which is in the nature of a hope to them ; and yet Paul says that what you already have is not hope. He says that hope is something which lies in the future. "Hope that is seen is not hope ; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for ?" What futurity is there in that which is perfected, and which stands in the present ? "But if we hope for that we see not [that which is not yet developed ; that which is to be grown into and reached forward to ; that which lies beyond], then do we with patience wait for it." Why ? Because hope is of such a nature that it gives impetus and courage by which we are rendered willing to abide delay until the time for realization or achievement comes.

A boy would be regarded as very foolish, who, trying to learn to carve, should be so discontented and so dissatisfied with his hand that he would, as it were, throw the clumsy thing away, and say, "It can't learn its trade ! it can't do anything !" The master would say to the pupil, under such circumstances, "My foolish boy, you will come to it by-and-by. Work and wait. My hand was clumsy as yours when I began."

An eminent painter goes into his studio, and finds the young man who has been apprenticed to him in a state of towering indignation, and beating his hand ; and he says to him, "What is the matter with your hand ?" The young man replies, "I have been trying to paint with it, but it smeared the canvass with the colors ; all goes wrong, and I am tired of trying." What would you think of a person who was beginning to learn to paint, if he became vexed with his hand, and abused it because it committed blunders, and could not do its work perfectly ? And yet, persons think they are doing God's service when they abuse their faculties, and call themselves names, saying, "I am such a sinner ! Oh, I never do anything right. I have no gracious affections. This old filthy soul of mine, this mean conscience of mine, this erring disposition of mine—what shall I do with it ?" They would like to kick it out and crucify it.

But if it is wrong to do so by the hand or the foot be-

fore there has been time or opportunity for skill to be developed in it, how much more is it wrong to do so by a faculty which has to go through a much longer apprenticeship, which requires great patience, and which cannot come to symmetrical union with the other faculties except by a protracted experience of joy and sorrow, of burden-bearing and pleasurable emotion, of all manner of fare by the way ? Does it take scores of years to make an efficient veteran or an able general ? and ought it not to take as long to make a soldier of the Lord, who faces no visible antagonist, and the weapons of whose warfare are spiritual, and whose enemies are in high places—the prince of the power of the air, leagued darkness, concealed temptations, hidden evils of every kind ?

We patiently wait for perfectness in any direction, if we have foresight and hope that God, in the great scheme by which he governs the world, means that we shall be steadily developed, and shall go on and on, to higher and higher attainments. We are patient with our pride, not in the sense of pampering it, but in the sense of waiting for the more perfect subjugation of it by love. We are patient with our vanity, not blinding ourselves to its weakness, but by culture converting it into a noble sentiment. We are patient with irritable tempers, not because we wish to excuse them or justify them, but because the fire that is in them can be put to the noblest uses.

So we wait patiently, or should, along the line of our whole life, and look forward, saying to ourselves, “I live by hope ; and every step forward is preparatory to the next. I live by faith ; and every stage of excellence that is developed in me is a prophecy of better things in the future. I live with my thought projected onward and upward. I throw forward my life, and run after it.”

As sometimes during a battle, in a crisis, when the fight is hottest and the chances are uncertain, the color-bearer hurls the flag into the midst of the enemy, so as to inspire the soldiers to rush forward and rescue it, and bring it back ; so men, in the conflicts of life, throw into the future their hope of all that is dear to them, of fidelity, of purity, of Christian attainment, that they may more earnestly, more

zealously and more courageously press forward after it, and finally attain it.

I remark, then, first, that any presentation of the Gospel which does not produce a cheerful forelooking is characteristically defective. All ways of preaching the Gospel of Christ which, as their characteristic result, inspire men with despondency and with an overpowering sense of difficulty, tending to discouragement and making the heart gloomy, are untrue to the spirit and genius of that Gospel. I cannot conceive of any burlesque more grim, or any hemispheric and continental jest more hideous, than that which has been perpetrated by the mountebanks of time, where men have been taught that they are brought into this world on livid errands of eternal damnation, and that all things are fixed both in the secret counsels of God and in the everlasting overt decrees of God, holding them more mightily than a lion's paw holds the mouse; and that, do what they will, there is the line laid down for them, and they are impelled along that line. Just as the shuttle is impelled, by irresistible power, to carry the thread which is put into it, and weave the fabric that has been designed, it being never consulted; so it has been taught that men were sent into this world to carry on, without volition of their own, and in spite of them, a process tending towards their eternal damnation. And this has been called "Good News"! There is where the jest comes in. Why, out of the Egyptian caves they had a doctrine of fate which was as good as that. All through Roman life, back into Tuscan life from whence much of its spirit came, there was a doctrine of the future which was hideous enough without any further intensifying of its hideousness. Nature had groaning enough; the great animal-bearing globe had fierceness enough and inevitableness enough; and to add to that groaning, to that fierceness and to that inevitableness a doctrine which should enslave the intellects of men so that they could not extricate themselves, and then to preach that as the truth of God revealed in Jesus Christ, and call it "Good News"—was there ever another such awful jest!

A jailor goes to a prisoner—the father of a household—a man full of the purest love to his companion and children,

who has lost all his friends, and all his property—a jailor goes to such a man, smiling and joyful, and says, “My dear friend, wake up! I have something to tell you that you would like to hear.” The man, startled, wakes himself, and says, “What! am I pardoned?” “Oh, better than that!” “Well, am I to have a new trial?” “No, better than that; the Court has taken your case into consideration, and has decreed that you shall be cut into inch-pieces, and that your wife and children shall be permitted to sit in a balcony where they can see the operation and rejoice over it”!

Do you tell me that God and the angels are to look into hell and see the torments of men who were foreordained from all eternity to reprobation, and that they will look approvingly upon the scene, and take comfort in it? and do you call it “good news”? and do you send it out into the world and tell men to preach it everywhere? Why, the devil could have preached that without any help. He did not need any help or special skill for that.

Any presentation of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that does not come to the world as the balmy days of May come to the yet unlocked northern zones; any way of preaching the love of God in Christ Jesus which is not as full of sweetness as the voice of the angels when they sang at the Advent; any mode of making known the proclamation of mercy which has not at least as many birds as there are in June, and as many flowers as the dumb meadow knows how to bring forth; any method of bringing before men the doctrine of salvation which does not make every one feel, “There is *hope* for me—in God, in the divine plan, in the very nature of the organization of human life and society,” is spurious, is a slander on God, and is blasphemy against love.

[At this point the congregation interrupted Mr. Beecher with an unmistakable and pronounced manifestation of applause, and then suddenly stopped, as if alarmed or ashamed. Mr. Beecher smiled, and said:]

[Some folks will be very much troubled at that. Don’t! We are so refined in modern times that when, in the church and on the Sabbath-day, truths are spoken that make a man’s

soul jump, and give expression to its emotions, people think it desecrates Sunday, and dishonors the house of God. I do not know what they would have done if they had sat and heard Christ deliver the Sermon on the Mount, when everybody interrupted him with questions, and there was talking backward and forward. I do not know what they would have done if they had listened to the preaching of the golden-mouthed Chrysostom, when the people felt much, and freely gave utterance to their feelings. I do not know why Sunday is too good for joy, or why a church is too good for the expression of it, if it be a genuine impulse. *I like it*; but then, do not let my likings mislead *you*; for you may get into the newspapers !]

There is an error in preaching the Gospel which springs from a worthy motive, but which is mischievous—namely, that of representing human nature as being so sinful, and the work of regeneration as being so difficult and so uncertain, as to throw doubt over the minds of men. There is, it is true, a sense in which our Master did that. He said, “Many are called, but few are chosen.” He said, “Straight and narrow is the way to life, and few go in it; but broad is the way to death, and many throng it.” He said, “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” When asked, “Are there many that shall be saved?” he said, “Strive ye to enter.” He said all those things; and I say them, too—that is, to men who are careless, to men who think they are going into the higher life without effort, without development, without transformation, without divine inspiration, without culture. I say it to men who, in the great thundering street, are rushing hither and thither, heedless of the higher life. But to any congregation that are enough interested in the subject of religion to give their hour for instruction in it, I would not say it, in any such way as to shut the door of possibility. I would not say it to men who are willing to hear the truth preached. Is the work of God on the human soul so uncertain that when men go to hear the Gospel a minister is justified in declaring it so as to leave the impression on their minds of supercautiousness and utter discouragement?

I hold that man, by nature, is low enough. He is an animal ; and I hold that only by unfoldings does he come to be a social being, a reasonable being, a moral being, a spiritual being. I hold that every man needs the inoculation of the divine Soul before that which joins him to the divine nature has been developed in him. As there must be the impregnation of pollen before you can have fruit, so I hold that there must be the divine impregnation before divine attributes can be brought forth in man. But I hold that that which Jesus taught in the Gospel was concurrent with the divinely natural tendencies of men. I hold that these natural tendencies lie in the plane of God's original decrees and intents, and that they are in accordance with the purpose and the wish of a guiding Providence. And I hold that the impression which is produced on a congregation should be one of hope, and not of caution, nor of fear, nor of hesitancy.

There is an impression among persons in respect to religion, that one may go through a revival, and enter the church as a Christian person, and be all right ; but that it is a thing so out of the ordinary line, and requiring such a preparation and such influences, that there is not much hope of your succeeding if you undertake to become a Christian.

Now, I say that to every honest man, and every rightly inclined man, living in his household in normal relations and endeavoring to live correctly, who, looking forward into the future, undertakes to guide himself according to the great platform and law of divine love, it not only is not a matter of doubt, but it is a matter inevitable, that he will go right if he holds to his resolution ; it is as certain as that if you sow in your garden seeds of flowers that belong to our zone you will have flowers. Now and then there will be a season when the seeds will rot in the ground ; and there are many sermons that come to naught ; and yet, as even such seeds add something to the richness of the soil, so there is something even in these sermons. There is foolishness in them, at least. Paul speaks, you know, of "the foolishness of preaching." But, as a rule, seeds, when sown, grow ; and it is worth any man's while to

have a garden. There is no man so poor that he cannot afford to have some flowers ; and every man who takes the pains to sow the seeds, and avails himself of light and warmth from the sun, and of moisture from the clouds, may confidently expect to have flowers and fruits. And yet, not more certain is the wise husbandman of his harvests, than is the honest-minded man of going right, if he wants to be right, and puts himself into the conditions which the Scripture recommends.

Far be it from me to revile the memory of godly men who stood as pillars in the past ; but I bear in mind some instances of men who preached the Gospel with such dolorous caution that you would think the bell inviting you to the marriage supper of the Lamb was a funeral bell, and that the pæan of victory sounding afar off through the air was a requiem. They were good men. They were splendid old fellows in many respects. If they had been husbandmen or mechanics or soldiers or professional men outside of theology and preaching, they would have adorned their business. They were grand specimens of their time. And yet, when men ventured to go to them, saying, "I think I am moved to converse on the subject of religion, and ask guidance," they looked solemn, and in a sepulchral tone said, "O my friend, if God's spirit is striving with you, you are in a *very dangerous* place. Now, my advice is that you go home, and look well into this matter. It is an *awful* thing to be self-deceived. It is an *awful* thing to grieve the spirit of God." I, too, think that self-deception and grieving the spirit of God are awful things ; and it is not necessary caution that I object to : it is representing to the young mind that the characteristic element of religion is danger, whereas the characteristic element of religion is *hope*.

If the truer spirit of the Gospel should speak, what would it say? "O ye, that know how to love father and mother, there has begun in you that divine quality which can teach you to love God. O ye, who have nourished virtue and who know what it is to deny yourselves on every side that virtue may flourish, you have the germinant form of that which may, by the light of God's countenance, be ripened into better forms.

O ye, that have rays of hope now and then gleaming through fear and caution, you are in the line of unfolding." This is what God's spirit says.

Hope, then, is the characteristic element of the Gospel of Christ. There are temptations, there are obstacles, there are difficulties, and there are, in special cases, reasons in the constitutions of men, why they should be held to caution as a means of inciting and stimulating them; but no man preaches the Gospel by putting out the light of hope, and saying, "When you have done so much, and so much, and so much, and gone so far, and so far, and so far, then I will kindle that light again." It ought to shine from the beginning, and all the while.

And I say to every person, It is a dismal thing to be without God; it is a joyful thing to live in the hope of the Lord Jesus Christ; and there is no reason why any young man or maiden, or any old man or matron, should not be a follower of the Saviour. To yield him allegiance is in accordance with your right nature. God designed that you should be religious. Every man who is without religion has left a large part, and the best part, of himself unopened and unused. All the forces of your constitution, all the elements of God's law and scheme, all the tendencies of divine providence, and all those things which enable a man to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling because it is God that works in him, should inspire hope.

All those nice analyses which men make of themselves, and all that sitting of the court in which the conscience is justice, to determine whether a man may or may not rejoice, is not in accordance with the true spirit of the Gospel. Conscience is a very good faculty, but it has been wrongly estimated. It has generally been considered chief-justice; but no, it is not chief-justice, for a great many reasons. No other one faculty can be tampered with and bribed as the conscience can; and a man who calls conscience to the chief-justice's chair, and says, "That will determine right and wrong for me," commits a great mistake. There is nothing that conscience works more with than will; and there is no court in which the chief-justice should be under the domin-

ion of the will. Conscience is one of the most fiery, sensitive, nervous, and fault-finding of the faculties. It led Paul to go clear to Damascus and persecute the people of God ; and he thought that he was doing right. Conscience has kindled more fires, turned more breaking-wheels, put more men on racks, extinguished more humanities and equities, and filled the world fuller of mournings, than any other one faculty of the human soul.

Now, nothing is worthy to be chief-justice that can be tampered with as the conscience can. There is one thing that cannot be tampered with, and that is the spirit of divinely inspired love. The easiest men in the world to manage are those who are combative and obstinate and conscientious. You know exactly how to deal with them. If a man is obstinate, and you want him to go one way, you push him the other way, and then you have him. Men of hard knotty temperaments are not difficult to manage if you have the time, and think it worth while to manage them.

But when you take love (I do not mean the commoner quality ; I do not mean shinplasters passing for love : I mean bullion ; I mean specie-basis love, such as springs from the inspiration of God, and is in sympathy both ways, toward God and toward men)—when you take such love you cannot bribe it. It controls every one of the other faculties. It tempers the acerbity of anger. It brings pride into its service. It leads the various elements of the soul to give themselves to wholesome uses, as naturally as the sun turns sour to saccharine. Therefore it should be the chief justice in each man's soul.

When a Christian is all the time trying himself by the law of rectitude, he is not free. Paul said that when men were under the law they were in bondage. No man is happy who is subject to a condemning conscience. You never will have peace until you have trust in Jesus Christ, which is a synonym for living in the atmosphere of love.

I wonder how it is that so many precious symbols and emblems are lost to us. Men go through the seventh and eighth of Romans as though there were no interpretation of them, when there is one in every family.

A boy is forbidden by his father and mother to go out in the night. At nine o'clock he quietly slips down stairs, and steals a little money out of his mother's drawer, and runs off to the circus or the theater ; and he falls in with some companions ; and, wanting to make them think that he is a man, he goes to smoking and drinking. It is not long before he is found out at home. The father and mother say nothing to him, but he somehow feels that their eyes are upon him. He is conscious that he is not at one with them. There is an unusual stillness at the table ; he is not sent on such confidential errands as he used to be ; he is watched ; and he is quite unhappy. By-and-by his father says, "Henry, I want to see you in my study." The whole soul of the boy is stirred, and he begins to chide himself, and say, "I wish I had not gone. What a fool I was ! I have not been happy a minute since I went. How silly it was in me to make believe that I enjoyed it, when it made me wretched all the time. The result is that I have got into trouble with my father, and I know what is coming now—I shall get a whipping."

He is a perfect embodiment of the seventh of Romans. He says, "I won't do it again ;" and he goes to his father expecting a discourse—with an application !

The father meets the boy with great love and great gentleness, and tells him what he has heard ; and the boy begins to cry—if he has a bit of boy in him he does ; and the father says, "Now, my dear boy, I love you as I do myself. I am sorry for all this ; but I am not going to scold you. I certainly am not going to punish you. It cuts me to the heart that you betrayed my trust in you ; I cannot tell you how it pains me that my boy has not more honor ; and I am grieved beyond expression that I cannot lean on you." The boy says to himself, "I wish he would whip me, and stop this talking." Now he would rather have that which before he dreaded.

Finally, the father puts his arm about him, and says, "Now, Henry, is this the end ?" The boy says, "Yes, it is the end." "Very well," says the father, "let it be the end. You are my own dear boy ; I am going to trust you just as I always have ; and if you feel tempted, come right to me.

If you want to do anything, I would rather you would tell me about it first, than do it and let me find it out afterwards."

When a boy goes out of the presence of his father under such circumstances, I should like to know what he would say of that father, if he had language with which to express his feelings. "Ah! he is the royalest man on earth. What a father I have! How I love him! I am afraid I shall do something that I ought not to. I do not know how I can show myself worthy of such a father. I am going to try to do right; and I will tell him when I do wrong."

Here is the eighth of Romans begun. The boy has been forgiven. He went wrong; he sinned against himself and his parents; he had his little struggle; his father manifested toward him a spirit of love; he confessed his wrong-doing; he received forgiveness; and his father said to him, "Trust me; I am going to help you. Keep loving me; I will keep loving you. You are a boy, you have a boy's weaknesses, very likely you will be tempted; and I am going to stand by you clear to the end." Would it not be a base and vulgar nature that would not be true after such an assurance as that?

That is the eighth of Romans. That is Christ reconciling us to him, doing it by the power of love, and making us feel that our strength is not in ourselves, that we stand not in our goodness but in the goodness of God, that we shall find rest in communion with the divine, and that our development through providence is made certain by the inevitable law of love, if we persevere to the end.

Wherefore, hope is the distinctive quality of the Gospel. It is the quality which should be inspired by the love of God in Christ Jesus in the human soul. And you are saved by hope—not by fear, nor by conscience, nor by regrets of the past, nor by a realization of the meagerness and barrenness of the present, but by that future which is made radiant by the glow of God's face filled full of gracious promises of mercy, and breathing summer out of the heart of heaven upon the souls of men.

In the love of God in Christ Jesus, which is higher than

the heights, lower than the depths, wider than horizons, passing understanding—in this great love is hope for everybody. Poor, trembling, unhappy soul, do not think that your hope lies in your making your old clothes seem as good as new. Do not think that your hope lies in your repenting of your sins. Your hope lies in the abundance and generosity of the love of God in Christ Jesus. It lies in the fact that there is enough in the love of God for you, that God gives it to you, and that it is yours as long as you will take it.

All those views, then, which set at defiance the blessedness of this hope in Christ and God are contrary to the explicit teaching of the Word of God.

I beseech of you, Christian brethren, cast not away your hope. You that go astray, and are obliged to register against yourselves great mistakes ; you that stumble, and fight manfully against inordinate affections and strong and fiery lusts ; you that struggle dubiously, at times, in the battle of life ; you that long for the development of positive graces—for love, for purity, for joy, for peace ; you that would bring forth the fruits of the Spirit—for you are all the blessed promises of God.

So cleanse fear out of your lives. Come forth from bondage. Escape from the prison-house. You are Christ's sons : wear Christ's badges. You are the children of Christ : put on the raiment that belongs to his children. Do not stand in the expectation that you are to be saved because you are good : you are to be saved because you are under the guidance of Him who is ripening you, as the summer's sun ripens fruits.

It is with human beings as it is with plants. Some things come early, and die without developing either blossoms or fruit. So some children die before they have been able to show much growth. Some things wait till June, when their branches are filled with brilliant blossoms, and then die. So some young persons come to the threshold of life, and develop certain elements, and do a certain work, and are full of promise, and then disappear, God having taken them. Some things, like the aster and the golden rod, bloom in September and October, and lay their glowing clusters right on the

very cheek of frost, and are good to the end. So there are men who live along till the very winter slays them. And they who go in the early spring, they who go in mid-summer, and they who go late in the autumn, are all under the same beneficent guidance. It is the same season of grace, nourishing them, and preparing them, and carrying them up to a better sphere.

O ye that are wind-driven ; O ye that are weather-bound ; O ye that are frosted or frozen ; O ye that are seeking fairer climes ; O ye that are fruitless and unbearing—your strength is not in your own good, but in the summer's sun, that comes nearer day by day to seek you and to work out of you that which is planted in you by the hand of God.

Dear friends, the spirit of God seeks you, and will work mightily in you, unfolding and unfolding your nature, until the time comes when you shall disappear to us, that you may appear among the spirits of just men made perfect.

Then hope ; hope on ; hope to the end ; and be ye saved by hope.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE thank thee, our Father, that our thoughts go along the way of life. We are not mourners, though sometimes we mourn; nor are we children of darkness, though sometimes we sit in the shadow of death. We are called of God. To us, to every one that heareth, and to every one that will, is the call to life, to hope, and to joy. We draw near to thee this morning for our portion of the inheritance—for the earnest of the promised possession, the foretoken, the something which thou sendest before to bring us up out of Egypt and into the promised land.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant unto us such an assurance of thine own self, such a sense of the warmth of soul that comes from thy brooding, such a sense of God speaking within, that we shall know our fellowship and sonship, and that we shall be able to breathe a new consciousness of adoption, and feel that thou art our dear Father.

Grant us, this morning, we beseech of thee, faith in God, hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, and life through the Holy Ghost. We beseech of thee that thus thou wilt win us from undue adhesions to the world. Deliver us from the bondage of overmuch labor, from the torment of vexatious care, from the fears that tyrannize over the soul, from the despotism of evil habits, and from all things that limit us, and hinder the freedom of our emotion toward thee, and take away from the sweetness of our communion with thee, and from the liberty and power of the gift of God that is within us.

We pray that thou wilt, by thine own power, O thou blessed and holy One, deliver us from the thrall of sin. Give us strength in the day of temptation. Teach us how to use the world as not abusing it; how to make all things lawful; how to convert whatever is in life to the usages of our reason, and to the honor of our higher nature that is of God, that we shall be able to walk as free men, a law unto ourselves, inspired continually with that wisdom which is from above.

And so we pray that thou wilt give us strength among men, that we may shed cheer upon them, and give courage to those who are in despondency, and wisdom to those who lack it; so that out of our souls may be breathed those sweet winds which shall bring in all such as lie in calm, and cannot move themselves.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing, this morning, to all who have come up into thy sanctuary needing thee, and conscious of their need. May they who bear burdens be relieved of them. May those who do not dare to call themselves the children of God be drawn by childlike clinging to thee as their Father. Thou that dost by the shining of the sun bring all sweet and pleasant things out of the earth, canst thou not more, by the shining of the Sun of Righteousness, bring from our dead hearts glorious blossoms and fruits.

We pray that thou wilt vindicate thy presence and power to every-one who is in doubt concerning them. Thou that art the Life-giver, give life to those who are dead in things spiritual. We pray that all thine oppressed ones, that all thy weak ones, that all thy tempted ones, that all thy sinning ones, that all thy people who are out of the

way in any manner whatsoever, may be brought to thee. O thou blessed High-priest that hast compassion, look upon those who need thee, and have compassion upon them.

We pray that thou wilt open, to-day, to everyone of us, the greater horizon that bounds and glorifies this lesser horizon of time. May we behold, far beyond our heaven, the heaven of heavens. May we discern more than thought can find, and more than language can express. O grant that it may be for us, also, standing here, to discern things which it is not lawful to utter. And so grant that in our experience there may be developed that peace which passeth all understanding; that joy which is full of glory; that hope which overcometh; that blessedness which they have who are kept in the peace of the Holy Ghost.

Draw near to any who mourn, and grant that their sorrow may be blessed of God, and sweetened into all nourishment for their souls. May those who are in bitter disappointments be reconciled to the providence of God, and know how to be contented in the places and in the circumstances in which they are, and how by patience to overcome the rude thralls of temptation. Grant to those who are standing and waiting for the indications of thy providence to know the way of duty, light and guidance and assurance, that they may hear thee saying, This is the way: walk ye in it.

We pray that we may so dwell in the desire of love, and of trust in God, and of peace in God, and of hope in God, that all things shall be clear to us; and that those complications which come from the interference of passions, and those knots which selfishness doth tie, and those snarls which come from intemperate ways, may all be loosed or be destroyed; and that we may live in that blessed empyrean which is light and guidance, so that whichever way the Lord shall waft us shall be the way that is most delightful to us.

We pray, not only that we may have the consciousness of growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but that we may also bear with us more and more friendships and affections into the high and blessed realm above, so that we may feel that we are carrying our dear ones, and are being borne by them, into the assemblage of the spirits of just men made perfect.

We pray that thou wilt enter into every dwelling, and that thou wilt say in each household, Peace be with you.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt teach us more and more to rejoice, not alone in the outward victory of the visible church, but in the victory of that great invisible church to which we belong, and from which we derive our inspiration. We thank thee that it is so rich. We thank thee that in every age multitudes run into it as rivers into the sea; that it is already filled with so many whom we have known and loved upon earth; and that it is no longer the great Sahara of our thought, barren and desolate—but home-like. May it become to us more and more, as we transfer thither the things which are most beautiful and most desirable to our souls, our Father's house; and may we realize that we are strangers and pilgrims, seeking a better country—a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God, and whose inhabitants lovingly call out to us, Come,

come! Out of trouble, out of sorrow, out of night, may we spread our wings and fly away to be at rest.

Grant thy blessing, dear Father, to rest on all assemblies that are gathered together for worship this day; and may the messages which are delivered to them be messages of faith and love. We pray that thou wilt remember all the efforts which are being made to further the cause of truth and justice and morality. Guide those who are inspired to labor in thy cause, that they may do the best things, and that they may do them in the best spirit. Bless the schools and missionary enterprises that are connected with this church. May thy blessing rest richly upon the brethren who are laboring in them. We thank thee that under their ministrations so many are being called in, and brought to a knowledge of God.

Grant thy blessing, especially, upon that Council* which is to be convoked, this week, in our midst. Grant that all who shall come hither may come with the sanctifying spirit of God resting upon them; that there may be no discord; that there may be the divine leading; and that they may dwell in the perfect presence and spirit of the Lord and Master, and do those things which shall be for the furtherance of thine honor, and forbear those things which shall make for trouble and for harm. Everywhere, may all conferences, all presbyteries, all synods, all assemblies, all convocations, have the spirit of Christ within them, that the things which shall be done in the name of Christ may be Christlike.

Spread abroad the knowledge of the truth in all the world. Hasten the day when thy promises shall be fulfilled, and when from the rising of the sun till the going down of the same all men shall know thee and love thee. And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*



PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

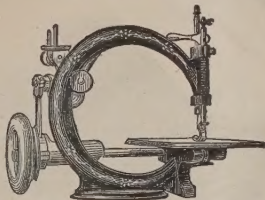
Our Father, we pray that thou wilt bless the word spoken, and grant that it may not be in vain. Deliver us from all the tyranny of fear; deliver us from bondage in the disgraceful prison-house where anguish casts many a man. Deliver us from phantasy and from all insane visions. May we have the simplicity of children, and know that the way of life is the way of love and hope and trust; and to these may we give ourselves, and be nurtured in them till we have fulfilled our mission here, and until thou hast prepared us for blessedness beyond; and then bring us home to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon our heads. And to Thee shall be the praise of our salvation, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

* Council of Congregational Churches, called by the Church of the Pilgrims and the Clinton Avenue Congregational Church.

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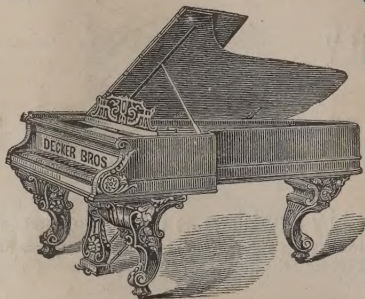
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